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Hunter Statement on Transfer of Power in Iraq

Washington, D.C. – House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-CA), responding to suggestions that the transfer of sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government be delayed, today made the following statement:

“It would be a mistake to postpone the transfer of power to an Iraqi government. Any delay would represent a victory for the terrorists and subversives who have attacked coalition forces and civilians in recent days. If the transfer were delayed until June of 2005, we could be assured that the same upsurge in violence would occur.

“The recent attacks are the isolated actions of a small anti-democratic minority. This is not an issue of troop levels in Iraq.

“Our task is not an easy one. What we must do is hold steady, maintaining a high state of alert and, working with the Coalition Provisional Authority, the Iraqi Governing Council, and the United Nations special advisor to Iraq, craft a smooth transition of power.”

Hunter also stressed that the transition of governmental power would not constitute a transfer of security responsibilities. Coalition forces would continue to maintain a security apparatus in Iraq. Also of note is the nation’s progress in providing for its own security. Iraq is on its way toward completing the largest law enforcement training program in history with 25,000 new police officers. Hunter further noted he is confident that a national assembly will be elected by the end of January 2005.

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